

# The Veterans Voice



*The Newsletter of the New Hampshire Veterans Home, Spring/Summer 2007*

## *New Hampshire Veterans Home Receives "Quality of Life" Award*



*NHVH residents Lucille Martel and  
Joel Stephens at the 2007  
Valentine's Day Dance*

The New Hampshire Veterans Home (NHVH) was recently honored by the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) with a Quality of Life Award. Only four New Hampshire nursing homes received the award, which recognizes facilities that make outstanding efforts to engage in programming that enhances the lives of its residents.

The New Hampshire Veterans Home was recognized for its many daily and ongoing quality of life enhancements such as its multigenerational programs with local school children, field trips to Red Sox games and other sporting events, the "Veterans Helping Veterans" letter-writing program that connects NHVH residents with today's men and women serving in the military, National Guard installations, and special community events. Last year, residents and staff members built a yellow-ribbon-themed float and entered it in the Tilton Old Home Day parade. Residents also enjoy concerts, movies, book discussions, and relaxing afternoons at an on-campus fishing pond.

The NHVH is also being honored for having established deep systems changes, organized around quality of life, and guided by the facility-specific Mission, Vision and Values statements. These documents are true working documents, guiding all aspects of decision-making, planning and implementation of culture change in the facility.

- The facility's Vision states that this home is the "resident's chosen home, where caring is assured, friendships abound and good lives go on."
- The management structure and practices support real and sustainable change, as well as multi-disciplinary participation in decision-making processes. This structure contrasts with the traditional top-down hierarchical structure familiar in most nursing homes.
- Long and short-term goals have been articulated and specific plans to attain goals are documented and being followed.
- A facility resident is an active member of the Leadership Team, participating in meaningful ways to represent the preferences, interests and concerns of his fellow residents.
- The Resident Council is an active and meaningful body, enjoying real opportunities to express their issues and concerns in a respectful and receptive environment.
- Resident participation in decision-making is also encouraged through the facility's Quality of Life Meetings, held twice monthly with residents, direct care staff, and members of the Leadership Team. This process also occurs monthly at 10:00 PM to ensure input from all shifts.

The mission of NHVH is to provide high quality, professional long-term care services to the Granite State's elderly and disabled veterans. NHVH is the only long-term care facility in the Granite State that is dedicated exclusively to veterans. As a professional health care provider, NHVH offers a full range of services including residential, medical/dental and nursing care as well as physical/occupational therapy, recreation, and dietary and social services. Chapel services, exercise groups, arts and crafts, shopping trips, live entertainment, and various community outings support residents' quality of life.

Additional information is available online at our website [www.nh.gov/veterans](http://www.nh.gov/veterans)

# From the Commandant: Don't Forget the Vets

By Barry Conway,  
NHVH Commandant



Throughout our history, respect for America's veterans has been either widespread or, at times, very poor. We've welcomed home returning GIs with marching bands, confetti, and kisses—or cold shoulders and protests. To analyze the reasons why, we'd have to dive into an ocean of politics and that's

not what we're about at the New Hampshire Veterans Home.

Recently I talked with James Mazzuchelli, a young veteran of the Iraq War. James just completed a 450 hour internship in Social Work here at the Veterans Home. I asked him if being a veteran himself helped him relate to our residents. He thought for a minute and said, "Although every war is different and each veteran's experience is unique, every veteran faces hardships, makes sacrifices, and experiences trauma and grief." He added, "Every soldier, sailor, Marine, or airman works closely with his or her fellow service members. You depend on each other—like no other job. Your life is in their hands and theirs' is in yours. I love working with other veterans. We have a common understanding and respect."

James' message is one we should all learn from. Whether someone is a veteran of World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan, or any other military conflict, they have all faced hardships, made sacrifices, and experienced trauma and grief. They have given parts of their lives—and sometimes their whole lives—for all of us—the people who hug them when they come home or the people who spit on them.

There are 200 men and women who live at the Veterans Home. Some are able to walk around and participate in the many wonderful activities we offer here. Some use wheelchairs or walkers. Some need oxygen to help them breathe. And some are in the final days of their lives. When I walk through the halls of the New Hampshire Veterans Home I

don't see amputees or people with disabilities. I see men and women who started out with the same hopes and dreams as all of us. I see people who went to war because they enlisted and some because they were drafted. It doesn't matter here. They all faced adversity, depended on each other, and made great sacrifices for us.

Veterans deserve our respect, appreciation, and support—whether they live independently, in a nursing home, or are receiving medical treatment in a hospital. In so many ways they are our heroes. On behalf of the Veterans Home, we want to remind everyone: "Don't Forget the Vet."

## A New Perspective...

*For more than two months this winter Barry Conway was four feet, three and a half inches tall.*

*"I had major reconstructive surgery on my foot," he recalls. "I was in a cast and used a wheelchair to get around. My mobility and independence were dramatically curtailed. Although it was a relatively minor inconvenience—10 weeks out of my life—it gave me a much greater appreciation for people with permanent disabilities."*

*Now Conway is 6'1" tall again—his normal height. He still has a boot cast and uses a cane or a walker to get around, but he's back on his feet again.*

*"Some of our residents will never be back on their feet again," he reflects. "My foot surgery has helped me see the courage and determination that so many of our residents demonstrate every day. Being temporarily 4' 3 ½" tall also made me think about how people who don't use wheelchairs talk to people in wheelchairs. It's nice when someone sits down and talks to you at your own level instead of towering above you. Empathy is a good thing."*



## Ed Colby: *Learning Something New Every Day*

A year before Paul Walsh died, Ed Colby took him home.

Paul had been a resident of Rochester, New Hampshire before he came to the New Hampshire Veterans Home and he sorely missed going to the Rochester Fair. "So Paul and I went home for a day—to the Fair, to his old neighborhood, not far from where I grew up too. Paul wouldn't use his wheelchair that day so it took us a while to get around, but it was worth it. It meant so much to him. This is what my job has been all about."

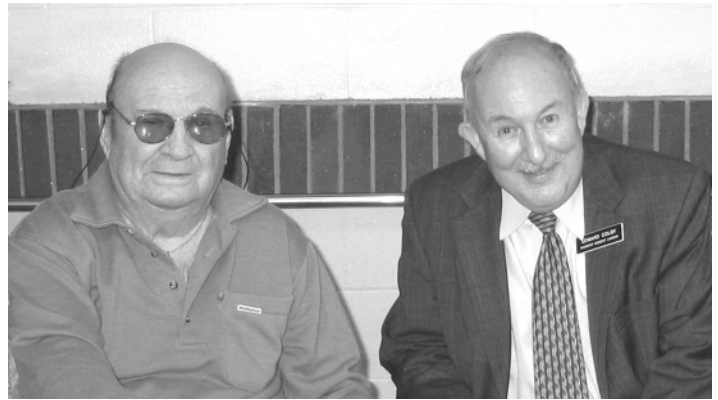
Ed Colby will retire in June with 14 years of service to the New Hampshire Veterans Home and an amazing total of 42 years of service with the State of New Hampshire.

"I've learned something every day," Ed says. "Most importantly this: each one of our residents is unique—with his—or her—own special needs. It's been part of my job to try to accommodate as many different situations as possible."

Ed's position as Resident Benefits Liaison involves assisting residents with any problems they may have with finances, their living situation, or understanding which veterans' benefits they should be receiving. Although he stresses that he can't solve every problem, he is very good at channeling a concern to the right department and following through to make sure it's resolved.

Ed doesn't like being in the limelight, so it's hard to get him to talk about himself. In fact, it's hard to take a picture of Ed without a resident in the photo. "He's a wonderful advocate for our residents," says NHVH Commandant Barry Conway. "When Ed's on your side, you know things will get done."

How does Ed feel about retiring? "I think it's a good time to retire because we have created a culture in which the resident *as a person* always comes first," he says. "Our challenge will always be to create and sustain an environment which is closer to a family environment than an institution—to make the quality of life of our residents a greater priority than accomplishing a checklist of daily tasks. After all, it doesn't really matter if someone would rather sleep until 10 or skip their bath on Tuesday. What matters



*NHVH Resident Bill Cundy with Ed Colby*

is that they are as happy and as healthy as we can help them be." He adds, "I don't mind retiring now because I feel like the right players are on board to make this Quality of Life commitment keep on growing."

And what will Ed do as a retiree? First, he doesn't plan to sit around and twiddle his thumbs. "I'm hoping to volunteer. I'd like to drive cancer patients to medical appointments and perhaps volunteer here at the Veterans Home. I'm also looking forward to spending time with my family."

We know Ed's retirement will be productive and creative—and we wish him all the best.

### *For Ed Colby, from a few of his many friends:*

"Ed is the soul of the Veterans Home."

*Barry Conway, Commandant*

"Ed is an incredible person and has been an outstanding mentor. There's something magical about him—he always sees the good in people."

*Bill Losefsky, Security/Safety Director*

"Ed and I go way back to the '70s. We've had many laughs and good times, but more than anything else I will always remember his kindness and compassion."

*Alice Brown, Assistant to the Commandant*

"Whether you've known Ed for 20 minutes or 20 years, his gentleness comes shining through. He appreciates the value of life as well as its meaning; everyone who comes in contact with him—family, friends, co-workers, and residents—is better for having known him."

*Garry Naughton, Director of Operations*

"I've worked with Ed for so many years, I like to call him my 'work husband'—he's a great guy and we'll *all* miss him!"

*Nancy Nolin, Chief Accountant*



# *New Hampshire Veterans Home Intergenerational Programs*

Students from the Paul Smith School in Franklin, NH regularly visit the residents of the New Hampshire Veterans Home and practice their reading with them. Tom Heald, a Program Manager at the Veterans Home, says, "This is a great example of how effective an intergeneration program can be. The residents love helping the children, and the children are surrounded by caring older adults who give them their undivided attention. Our Intergenerational Program helps enhance the quality of life for both residents and for the children who visit. It is a remarkably positive—and slightly magical—experience for everyone."





*NHVH Resident Bob Wesson shares planting tips with Derek Boucher, a WRHS student.*

## *"Operation Budding Buddies" Celebrates Spring at the New Hampshire Veterans Home*

Spring is in the air at the New Hampshire Veterans Home and Bob Wesson is happy to be planting again. A resident of the New Hampshire Veterans Home (NHVH) since 2003, Bob lived in Pittsfield for many years and was a farmer there. Through the NHVH's "Operation Budding Buddies" Program, Bob and many of his fellow residents team up with students from Winnisquam Regional High School's (WRHS) Agricultural Education Center to start flower and vegetable seeds that will be planted in raised beds on the grounds of the Veterans Home in May. Bob smiles when he says, "I love to watch things grow."

Students at the Ag Center participate in hands-on experiences and skill training that help them obtain jobs or continue their education in a two or four year college. By working with NHVH residents, they share what they've learned and often pick up pointers from residents like Bob Wesson.

James Mazzuchelli, a Plymouth State University Social Work intern at the Veterans Home, worked with WRHS Agriculture teacher Janet Rosequist to help rekindle the program, which had been dormant for several years. James says, "This program benefits both residents and students. Many of the residents have personal experience in botany, agriculture, or leisure gardens; some, like Bob, were full time farmers. The residents share their past experience and the students share their knowledge through their current studies."

The nine students are taking a course in Interior Horticulture at WRHS. They study greenhouse methods, floral design, and houseplants. Operation Budding Buddies gives them much more.

Colton McCarthy, one of the WRHS students, likes to talk with the residents about the upcoming Red Sox season. "What's the best thing about this program?" he grinned, "The vets. We have a lot of fun together."



*NHVH Resident Merton Church gives WRHS student Colton McCarthy a "thumbs up" and WRHS teacher Ellen Welch, NHVH resident Hank Keeler, and WRHS student Kenna Jean get to know each other as they plant vegetable and flower seeds for summer gardens at the Veterans Home.*

## Capital Projects: Continuing to Enhance Quality of Life

On April 11 the New Hampshire Veterans Home became one of just four New Hampshire nursing homes to win the 2007 Quality of Life Award from the New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services. We are incredibly proud of this accomplishment and equally committed to improving the Quality of Life at the Veterans Home every year. As part of this promise to our residents and families we are embarking on a significant capital project that will make our home an even more vibrant place to live.

*Beginning this summer we will:*

- Install 58,000 square feet of new roofing on Tarr North.
- Upgrade heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems on Tarr North, South, and Welch units for improved climate control.
- Install a new nurse call bell system.
- Add a new 150 kw generator for backup power.
- Install new energy efficient doors and windows in the Tarr North and Welch buildings.
- Upgrade our fire suppression system.

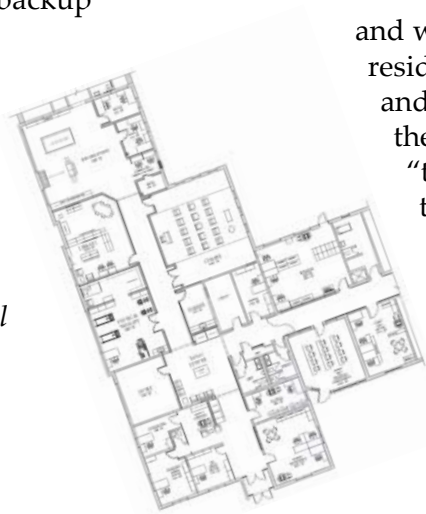
*In addition, our new Main Street Project will include a:*

- Barber Shop
- Store/Gift Shop
- Bank
- Expanded, renovated chapel
- Library/media center
- Physical/occupational therapy facility
- Renovated recreation area with fireplace, flat screen TV, and pool table.

In order to accomplish these renovations, we will be temporarily relocating some of our Tarr and Welch residents to nearby rooms while their units are being upgraded. We plan to do the construction in phases



*The Transitional Planning Committee meets each week to assure that the temporary relocation of residents and staff will be as smooth as possible.*



and will provide regular updates to our residents and families. For consistency and for the comfort of our residents, their nursing staff will stay with “their” residents throughout the transition period.

Although we all (residents and staff!) expect to experience some inconveniences during the coming months, we are confident that this project will add significantly to the quality of life we can provide. We encourage family members to call their loved one’s Social Worker with questions or concerns.

**If you would like to make a contribution to the New Hampshire Veterans Home for the benefit of our Residents, please use the enclosed envelope or contact Barry Conway, NHVH Commandant, at 527-4400. Thank you!**



## *Employee Wellness at the New Hampshire Veterans Home*

Sandy Valtz, RNC, has worked at the New Hampshire Veterans Home for 18 years and always looks forward to new challenges. In her position as Infection Control Nurse and Quality Assurance Supporter, she focuses on teaching every day. She says, "The most important thing we can do is to **prevent infection**—wash your hands frequently with plenty of soap and water or use hand sanitizer. If you sneeze or cough, cough into your arm, not your hands. If you're sick, stay home. **If there is an infection, contain and control it.** Most infections are spread by contact, so hand washing is the number one way to prevent further contamination."

Sandy is also the Employee Wellness Coordinator at the New Hampshire Veterans Home. The Wellness Committee is working to help NHVH employees stay healthier. Beth Benz, Denise Corey, Kris Day, Anne Howe, Mary Ann Wareing, Donna Wheeler and Sandy are the Committee members.

Sandy reports that the Employee Wellness Committee and the NHVH staff owe a huge thank you to Judy Knight for her generous donation of "seed money" for the Wellness Program. Sandy says, "Judy is so generous and a sweetheart, a great supporter." The funds will be used to buy educational material and some will be put aside towards the future purchase of a piece of workout equipment.

The Committee will continue to raise money for employee wellness initiatives at the Veterans Home with a Healthy Foods Salad Bar offered each month. The first Salad Bar was sold out in two hours and 60 people were served. With some of the proceeds from the first Healthy Foods sale, the Committee purchased 10 pedometers which are loaned out to the staff.

### **Current and Future Employee Wellness Activities**

- Salad Bars are offered once a month.
- Blood Pressure Checks are available every week.
- Weight Watchers started in March and will go for 12 weeks.
- We are beginning a staff library of Healthy Cooking/Eating books.
- Smoking Cessation will be offered this spring if at least six people enroll.
- Pedometers are available for staff use.
- Walking groups—beginners and advanced—are starting in April.
- We're promoting organized family/friends walks on weekends.
- We're studying the possibility of staff use of the physical therapy area when residents are not using the room.

### **The Employee Wellness Committee is hoping...**

To purchase an elliptical work exerciser machine and workout music for staff use at the home.

*For more information, contact Sandy Valtz at 527- 4864.*



*Wellness Committee members (left to right) Denise Corey, Nursing; Mary Ann Wareing, Dietician; Sandy Valtz, Nursing & Infection Control; and Donna Wheeler, CIS.*

*Missing from photo: Beth Benz, Recreation; Kris Day, Nursing; Anne Howe, Nursing.*



## New Hampshire Veterans Home

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## Notes from Admissions

The New Hampshire Veterans Home welcomes inquiries from prospective residents and their families. We strongly advise people to plan ahead, as there may be a waiting list by the time a candidate is ready for long term care. We invite candidates to come for a tour of the facility and meet our Admissions staff. Our phone number is (603) 527-4400.

### NH Veterans Home Admissions Criteria:

- \* Ninety days of service during time of war (as defined by Title 38 US Code Section 101) and honorably discharged.
- \* The applicant has been a resident of the State of New Hampshire for one (1) year preceding his or her application.
- \* The applicant's condition(s) are within the Home's resources and ability to treat, and the applicant does not present potential harm to self or other Residents.
- \* Financial Certification: We are not a Medicaid facility. One year review of assets is required.



ACTIVITIES ABOUND AT THE VETERANS HOME!  
NHVH residents Fred Bickerton, Richard Mumblo, and Roy Berry went to the first 2007 Red Sox/Yankees home game at Fenway Park with NHVH nurse Barbara Evans. (The Red Sox won!)

### *Comments from Resident Bob Blanchard:*

"The staff here at Tilton's Veterans Home is outstanding and their care of each individual is exceptional. They make you feel like you are the only person they're caring for, as they focus all their attention on meeting your needs. This attitude flows from the top down, from the Commandant—Barry E. Conway—to all the men and women working in the home. NHVH offers a full range of services; it's the only long term care facility in the Granite State that is dedicated exclusively to veterans."